

*C. asiaticus* Pallas, and concluded that it was undoubtedly *leschenaultii*. The specimen is now in the collection of the British Museum (Natural History).

Then on 21st August, 1968, R. H. Parker and I collected a second *C. leschenaultii* in the same place. It was alone, on an open sand beach. Identification of the specimen has been confirmed by R. Wagstaffe of Liverpool Museum. The specimen is now in the collection of the Zoology Museum, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

The first bird was immature, in active body moult but with fresh remiges and rectrices. It weighed 77.5 gms. and had a wing length of 134 mm. (maximum chord). The second was a female with all but the outer three primaries and central pair of rectrices new, and no body moult. It had a good deal of body fat and weighed 82.5 gms., with wing of 139 mm.

These are the first records of the species from West Africa. It breeds in the eastern Palaearctic, and has been recorded throughout the year on the coasts of Egypt and eastern Libya, though with no proof of breeding (Etchécopar and Hüe, 1967, *Bds. of North Africa*: 215). It winters on coastal mud flats from the Red Sea to South and South-West Africa. It is quite common on islands off the east coast of Africa, particularly Malagasy, Aldabra and the Comoros (Benson, 1967, *Atoll Research Bull.* 118: 89). There are very few records of this species inland in Africa, and this is the first evidence of a trans-Saharan migration (Moreau, 1967, *Ibis*: 243).

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## Isabelline Curlews and Turnstone in Eire

by Jeffery Harrison

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In view of the fact that records of albinism are comparatively rare in wading birds, three recent examples would seem worthy of recording.

Two of these concern the Curlew *Numenius arquata arquata*, both being seen on the shore close to Timoleague, Co. Cork, Eire, between 28th-30th September, 1968. These were virtually identical, being very pale, isabelline varieties, so pale as to look almost white, except for the primaries which were pale chestnut-brown. There was a slightly darker line through the eye, while some of the mantle feathers, wing-coverts and long tertials showed dark centres. The iris of one which was best seen (a female by its long bill) was a normal brown, the beak a paler brown than normal and the legs a pale pinkish-grey.

Although it seemed possible that the two were related, they did not go about together and were in fact only once seen together, when they crossed, flying in opposite directions. At low tide the female could always be found within a hundred yards along the same stretch of shoreline, in spite of having some ten miles of equally suitable shore to choose from, with other Curlews feeding all along it. It was thus rather interesting to note how restricted were the feeding grounds of this particular bird.

Mr. Bryan Sage has kindly allowed me to see his card index with reference

to albinism in the Curlew, of which he has 26 records. These can be divided into three groups:—

- (a) White or off-white primaries, otherwise normal (3).
- (b) Isabelline (11). All those showing any trace of pattern.
- (c) White (12).



*Photos: Pamela Harrison*

Isabelline Curlew seen near Timoleague, Co. Cork, Eire.

One rather curious feature of these records is that of the twelve records of white Curlews, no fewer than nine were recorded between 1856-1924, the other three occurring in 1948, 1949 and 1955 respectively, whereas eight of the eleven isabelline birds were recorded from 1947 to date, the other three being in 1856, 1924 and 1925 respectively.

This might have been thought to be due to more accurate recording in recent years, but the early records specifically refer to pure white birds and four of them were shot and preserved.

One of the two isabelline Curlews now recorded, the bird thought to be a female, was photographed by Dr. Pamela Harrison and is reproduced here.

An isabelline Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* was found with a flock of 200 normally coloured ones on the shore close to Akeragh Lough, Ballyheigue, Co. Kerry on 7th October, 1968, and again two days later. This bird showed a ghost pattern of pale grey and buff on the breast, upperparts, head and neck, wings and tail, the white being normal.

Sage has only three records; a white bird with grey head and shoulders seen in the Scilly Isles in 1953; another white one with some brown on the neck and tail at Milford Haven in 1956 and a third with the merest trace of pigment on the breast and in lines on the wing at Par, Cornwall, in 1962.

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I am most grateful to Bryan Sage for allowing me access to his card index collection of references and to Dr. Pamela Harrison for the photographs.

## A Corn-crake, *Crex crex* L., trapped in Kumasi, Ghana

by *Anders G. Dahm*

*Received 20th October, 1968*

In February, 1966, Mr. Philip E. Mensah—Technical Assistant, Department of Zoology, Univ. Sci. Tech., Kumasi (Ghana), asked me to identify a bird which he had trapped together with some local African birds. I recognised it as a Corn-crake, *Crex crex*, and this was confirmed at the British Museum (Natural History) as well as by Dr. Gustaf Rudebeck, Curator of the Zoology Museum, University of Lund (Sweden).

The specimen which is in the Museum collections of the Department of Zoology at the University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, was trapped in a marshy area in the early morning on 13th February, 1966, on the University Campus. It was a female with "well though not fully developed sex organs" according to the collector's notes. The plumage was in good condition, the crop contained some insect remains and the body weight was 100 grams. The wing length was 132 mm.; bill 19 mm.; tarsus 41 mm.; and tail 52 mm.

As far as I have been able to determine this specimen appears to be the first recorded from Ghana. The list of finds or observations of the Corn-crake in West Africa is a short one as, according to Moreau (1961), "in Africa nearly all the wintering records are in the east, from the Sudan to the Cape. In the western Sudan (Darfur) Lynes did not find it, but there are records much further west, namely, singles in Cameroons and Nigeria." For Nigeria Elgood, Sharland and Ward (1966) add to an earlier record on 5th April, 1929, at Oyo, a province in the Western Region (reported by Bannerman, 1953) a specimen shot on 8th April, 1960, at Calabar, Eastern Nigeria.